

Minutes
Catawba County Board of Commissioners
Special Session, Thursday, January 9, 2003, 8:30 a.m.

Appointments

NCACC 2003 Legislative Goal Conference Voting Delegate 669 01/09/03

College, Catawba Valley Community College

Higher Education Center 670 01/09/03

Courthouse, 1924

Request for use of grounds 673 01/09/03

Economic Development Corporation, Catawba County

Economic Development Goal 667&671 01/09/03

Goals, Board of Commissioners

2003 Legislative Goals 668 01/09/03

Fiscal Year 2002-2003 Goal Development 669 01/09/03

Landfill

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Legislation

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Mental Health

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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Thursday, January 9, 2003, 8:30 a.m., at the Catawba County Main Library in the Auditorium, located at 115 West C Street, Newton, North Carolina. The purpose of the special meeting was for goal setting for 2003-2004 and to discuss Legislation.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice Chairman Dan A. Hunsucker, Commissioners Glenn E. Barger, Barbara G. Beatty and Lynn M. Lail.

Absent. None.

A quorum was present.

Also present were County Manager/Deputy Clerk J. Thomas Lundy, Deputy County Manager Steven D. Wyatt, Assistant County Manager Mick W. Berry, County Attorney Robert Oren Eades, and County Clerk Thelda B. Rhoney.

1. Welcome and statement of purpose:

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. She said the purpose of the special meeting was for goal setting for 2003-2004 and to discuss Legislation. She welcomed staff and requested a moment of silence for the 21 lives lost in a plane crash at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport on Wednesday, January 8, 2003.

Chair Barnes read the County's Statement of Philosophy.

2. Legislative Discussion:

Deputy County Manager Steve Wyatt said the former Board on September 16, 2002, adopted the Legislative Goals for the NC General Assembly as a part of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) goal setting process. The NCACC goal setting process will culminate January 16 & 17, 2003, when counties will convene in Raleigh and vote on a legislative agenda. He said all five Board members are planning to attend the Legislative Goals Conference.

Mr. Wyatt said the NCACC had six pages of proposed goals and that all counties had the opportunity to submit goals. The goals that Catawba County submitted were heavily represented in those goals.

Mr. Wyatt said the NCACC's Top 10 Legislative Goals as recommended by the Legislative Goals Committee were as follows:

- Medicaid relief
- Local government Finance
- Legislative restriction on the withholding of funds
- Public duty doctrine
- Inspection fees
- Long-term care
- E-911 Fees
- Oppose taxing authority for school boards
- Charter schools
- School construction funding

Mr. Wyatt reviewed each individual 2003 Legislative Goal that was adopted on September 16, 2002, and the Board and staff discussed each goal at length.

Economic Development goal - Chair Barnes recommended that the Commissioners talk about the numbers of our unemployed to the legislators, not percentages. Catawba County's number of unemployed is larger than the total population of some North Carolina counties.

Commissioner Hunsucker requested that staff prepare a fact sheet on each of the County's legislative goals for the Board members to take to the Legislative Goals Conference.

Public Health Director Barry Blick reviewed the Public Health Issues goals. He said the Public Health Board adopted a resolution to tie the tobacco tax issue as a health issue for Medicaid increases. He said the Public Health Board and the Public Health Directors Association adopted a resolution recommending to link the revenues back to health care programs to lessen the program costs associated with alcohol/drug abuse. He briefly reviewed the goal that was included in the NCACC 2003 Legislative Goals.

Chair Barnes said Mental Health Director John Hardy requested that the Board of Commissioners endorse the position taken by the NCACC on the matter of Mental Health Services.

Mr. Wyatt said that the first two parts of the Board's public health issue goal did not make it to the NCACC Legislative Goals but they could be brought up again at the January 16th Legislative Goals Conference.

Chair Barnes thanked Mr. Wyatt for his work on the goals.

Mr. Wyatt asked if there were other issues to be added to the County's goals.

Chair Barnes said this was a new board and did it want to adopt the same goals.

Commissioner Lail said there were two goals to increase taxes and she recommended that there be only one. She also recommended that each Commissioner contact a Legislator. Chair Barnes asked each Commissioner to choose a legislator to contact.

Commissioner Lail said at the January 6, 2003 Public Health Board meeting a motion was made and carried to request that the Commissioners add to its list of 2003 Legislative Goals the issue of Tort Reform in North Carolina as it relates to medical malpractice.

Public Health Director Barry Blick briefly explained the escalating cost of medical malpractice insurance and as a result private practitioners are becoming reluctant to accept economically deprived and high-risk patients due to the possibility of lawsuits and malpractice claims.

County Attorney Robert Eades briefly reviewed Tort Reform.

County Manager J. Thomas Lundy said staff could talk with others in the medical field and make sure everyone has the same approach and supports the same goals.

It was the consensus of the board to obtain more information about Tort Reform before adopting a goal.

Chair Barnes requested that Mr. Blick report back to the Public Health Board.

The Board discussed school funding at length.

After a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Barger made a motion to adopt the following revised goals and also requested that staff provide fact sheets on each goal. The motion carried unanimously.

CATAWBA COUNTY 2003 LEGISLATIVE GOALS

Adopted January 9, 2003

- I. Medicaid
The State should assume the full non-federal share of Medicaid costs, or, provide counties with a new, dedicated revenue source equivalent to each County's share of the Medicaid match. A tax on tobacco products sufficient to fund this amount should be established.
- II. Local Government Finance
Seek legislation to allow all counties to enact any or all of several revenue options from among those that have already been authorized for any other county and to expand the application of sales tax to include services.
- III. E911 Fees
Counties should be granted flexibility in the expenditure of locally levied E911 telephone fees to cover the costs necessary to provide the entire equipment cost of the service.
- IV. Economic Development
The State should develop a mechanism that takes into account County unemployment rates and growth in unemployment rates in the application of state incentives for economic development. A suggested approach could be a temporary reduction in tier classification for counties experiencing significant changes in their employment base.

- V. Session Limits
Seek an amendment to the State constitution to prohibit the General Assembly from convening later than January 15 and no more than one hundred and twenty days in one any calendar year. Exceptions would be allowed only upon declaration of an emergency by the Governor.
- VI. Retirement System
Current law establishes an oversight Board for both the state employees and local government employees retirement systems. The governor appoints 13 of the 15 members – only 3 of which represent local government. Seek legislation, which increases local government representation and specifies that these additional representatives must be members of the system.
- VII. Public Health Issues – Board of Public Health resolutions
 - A. Support a tax increase to the national average applied to the real price of consumable alcoholic beverages with the resulting revenue distributed to health related programs administered by local public and mental health agencies under the authority of the Department of Health and Human Services.
 - B. Support legislation that delegates authority to local health departments to set all Environmental Health fees.

At 10:36 a.m. Chair Barnes called for a 15 minute break.

At 10:55 a.m. Chair Barnes called the meeting back to order.

Chair Barnes distributed and briefly reviewed the updated agenda for the Legislative Goals Conference.

- 3. Designation of NCACC 2003 Legislative Goal Conference Voting Delegate.

Commissioner Beatty made a motion to designate Chair Barnes as voting delegate. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Barger made a motion to designate Commissioner Beatty as voting alternate. The motion carried unanimously.

- 4. Board of Commissioners Goal Development and Adoption:

Budget Manger Judy Ikerd read the goals adopted for Fiscal Year 2002-2003.

Deputy County Manager Steve Wyatt gave the following PowerPoint presentation and requested Board feedback on each item:

Components of an effective goal

Tangible impact – it should meet an identified need and make a positive difference in the community and lives of citizens.

Measurable – you must be able to gauge progress toward the objective.

Achievable – it should be doable within the resources of the organization.

Implementation Timeframe

July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004

Solid Waste Convenience Centers

Objective: Increase the cost effectiveness of the centers

- A. Should each center pay for itself?
- B. Should the five centers as a whole breakeven financially?
- C. Should solid waste operations cover the financial losses of the centers but continue to break even overall?
- D. Should the losses be capped?

Both Options A, B, & D will require changes in the operations of the centers.

Option C is being achieved now.

Utilities and Engineering Director Barry Edwards said the County is projecting a loss of \$198,000 this year at the convenience sites and they are presently averaging a \$16,500 loss per month for all the convenience sites. Last year convenience sites in the County experienced a loss of \$227,667.55.

He reviewed the number of customers at each site and the hours of operation at each site. The biggest complaint at the convenience sites is inconsistency with the administration of fees by GDS contract employees.

Commissioner Lail asked about the GDS contract. Mr. Edwards said the current contract expires June 30, 2004, and he briefly discussed the contract.

Chair Barnes recommended another work session in the near future to discuss all the information on solid waste in the event there is a desire to proceed with a Request for Qualification (RFQ).

Commissioner Hunsucker said the board last year looked at the benefits the County was receiving from GDS. He thought it would be best to renegotiate the convenience sites with GDS instead of getting into a RFQ.

Mr. Edwards said GDS is a national company but many of the employees are citizens of Catawba County and take a great deal of pride in their work.

County Manager Lundy recommended that the board set a broad solid waste goal. The Board could devote some time to solid waste after a subcommittee session when the board was already in a regularly scheduled session. The regularly scheduled session could be extended several hours to allow staff to provide the information on solid waste.

Chair Barnes said Commissioner Lail needed to leave at 1:15 p.m.

At 12:00 noon, Chair Barnes called for a lunch break.

At 12:15 p.m., Chair Barnes called the meeting back to order and asked everyone to enjoy their lunch while the Board continued discussions.

Deputy County Manager Wyatt said it needs to be guaranteed that the solid waste that is generated in Catawba County be brought to the County's landfill. If the County controls its waste flow, which is called flow control, then the County could guarantee the financial viability of the solid waste fund. If the County loses the flow control, then the county is at risk and the per tonnage cost would have to be increased.

After a lengthy discussion, the board recommended the following solid waste goal:

Award a Solid Waste franchise agreement that provides quality service at a reasonable cost to County citizens and insures the financial viability of the County's Solid Waste Fund.

Higher Education

Objective: Increase County citizens access to higher learning opportunities thus enhancing individual citizen and overall community economic opportunities.

The Hickory Metro Higher Education Board has approved the CVCC East Campus as the site for the Center contingent upon facility upgrades.

The Board of Commissioners requested the drafting of a loan agreement to implement the facility upgrade. Loan agreement with Catawba Valley Community College

2003/04 goal for higher education?

Mr. Wyatt reviewed a proposed Loan Agreement with CVCC in the amount of \$350,000. Funds in the amount of \$150,000 will be forgiven upon compliance and the remaining \$200,000 will be considered a loan. The commissioners were requesting four appointees to the committee and additional members to the Higher Education Center Board of Directors. He said the center is proposed to open in May 2003. The Commissioners would need to approve the façade.

Catawba Valley Community College President Cuylar Dunbar and Ms. Linda Phillips were present.

Dr. Dunbar briefly discussed the \$150,000 donation to the Higher Education Center by Catawba County and the proposed Loan Agreement of \$200,000. He said \$150,000 was needed now for architectural design.

Dr. Dunbar and Ms. Phillips briefly discussed GED learning at CVCC as the laws recently changed.

Chair Barnes said it is important to move forward for the development and retraining of employees.

Commissioner Lail said the recruitment of a Director of the Higher Education Center is crucial. Dr. Dunbar said a candidate was selected but had already accepted other employment. He said they hope to name a director within the next few weeks.

Commissioner Beatty said she had received complaints about the Summer Scape Program. She believes it needs to be in one area and include a lunch hour. It is difficult for parents if they have more than one child who must be taken to two different areas.

Dr. Dunbar said they can check into those complaints and box lunches could be provided each day.

Dr. Dunbar said they would also have to move the truck driver training program. The program is in conjunction with Johnston Community College (JCC) and all FTE money generated goes to JCC. CVCC is then paid a fee to operate by JCC. CVCC will look at possibly offering the truck driver training program through CVCC. He said several community colleges have already ended the partnership with JCC. He said it is a very successful program and students are receiving one to three job offers after graduating.

Chair Barnes thanked Dr. Dunbar and Ms. Phillips for attending the work session.

After a brief discussion, the Board recommended the following goal:

Continue to work for the higher education of Catawba County citizens and citizens from surrounding counties by supporting the Higher Education Center.

Economic Development

Objective: Develop a strategy to help facilitate both a short-term recovery and a long-term stabilization of the County economic base.

The Economic Development Corporation is facilitating the Priority One Economic Forum January 21, 2003, 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Convention Center.

What investments should County government be making to improve both immediate and longer term economic issues?

2003/04 Economic Development goal?

Catawba County Economic Development Corporation President Scott Millar gave a brief update on EDC issues.

After a lengthy discussion, the Board recommended the following goal:

Continue to support economic development through Priority One, FORESIGHT, and CEDS with the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation as the lead agency.

At 1:15 p.m. Commissioner Lail left the meeting.

Strategic Growth Management

Objective: Promote sound land use management and community based development planning.

- A. Is the implementation of the Strategic Growth Plan through the development and implementation of the Small Area Planning (SAP) process helping to meet this objective?
- B. What changes, if any, should be made to the SAP process? How can it be improved?

Small Area Plan (SAP) Schedule:
Sherrills Ford – 2002/03
Balls Creek – 2003/04
St. Stephens/Oxford – 2003/04
Catawba – 2003/04
Startown – 2004/05
Plateau – 2004/05

2003/04 Strategic Growth Management goal?

Commissioner Beatty requested that the Board be given updates of the Small Area Planning Committee meetings and the attendance of the committee members. If members who are not attending the committee meetings may need to be replaced.

Mr. Wyatt said Mr. Eubanks could send the Board copies of the minutes from each of the SAP meetings.

Planning Director Jacky Eubanks said staff could provide updates to Board members at a Subcommittee meetings or staff could meet with one or two Board members to review the draft report on the SAPs.

Mr. Wyatt said in the future staff could provide the Board with drafts of the SAPs, then staff could meet with each Board member individually to review the draft. After staff compiles all recommendations a public hearing can be held before the Board of Commissioners.

Mr. Eubanks said rezoning issues are most important with the SAPs. He recommended a major review and amendments to the zoning and subdivision ordinances. He said there is a great deal of work to be done on the implementation side after the SAPs are approved.

County Attorney Robert Eades said he agreed with Mr. Eubanks, the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances have been in place a long time and need amending.

After a lengthy discussion, the Board recommended the following goal:

Conduct a comprehensive review of the County's zoning and subdivision ordinances and adopt revised regulations, compatible with the small area planning process, to guide growth.

Countywide Capital Facilities Needs

Objective: Begin a process to satisfy the pressing need for adequate school, court, jail, and other necessary government facilities.

- A. How do you determine the needs and their priorities?
- B. How do you fund them?

Discussion of school needs are ongoing.

A County facility needs study was completed in May 2000.

2003/04 goal for Countywide Capital Facilities Needs?

Other Issues?

Mr. Wyatt said in addition to schools there are other pressing issues such as future jail needs.

Mr. Lundy gave an update on current jail facilities. He said staff should receive the schools critical needs list by February 2003. He said there are other needs such as the emergency services plan, Medicaid, school operational improvements, and County departmental operating budgets. Mr. Lundy briefly reviewed financing and repayment options that are available and allowed by law. He said Finance Director Rodney Miller was working on a detailed list of options that should be completed within the next two weeks.

Commissioner Barger said the County should prioritize facility needs and have a plan for financing.

Commissioner Beatty mentioned the property owned by the County located on Slanting Bridge Road and the need to decide on the long-term use of the property.

Mr. Lundy said the Chamber has retained the services of Political Consultant Paul Shumaker and said the Chamber is willing to help raise money to spend for two purposes. One purpose is for Mr. Shumaker to draft questions for a citizen survey and the other purpose is to help publicize and market a bond campaign.

After a lengthy discussion, the Board requested that staff, within the next weeks, provide the Board with an evaluation of the County's critical needs and a proposed prioritized facility needs list.

5. Other items of business:

- a. County Manager Lundy said he had received a request from Minister Fannie H. Pinkston, Grace Ministries of Hickory, to use the 1924 Courthouse Grounds the week of January 12, 13, 14, and 15, 2003, for 30 minutes to give a talk in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Mr. Lundy said Minister Pinkston request could not be granted to use the 1924 Courthouse grounds pursuant to Catawba County Code of Ordinances, Section 210.04 (E) which states, "The meeting room(s) or grounds may not be reserved by commercial, religious or partisan political groups or quasi-educational, quasi-religious, or quasi-political groups, except as outlined in G.S. 163-99 when these political meetings are for the express purpose of biennial precinct meetings and county and district conventions."

Mr. Lundy said that he would send correspondence to Minister Pinkston recommending that she contact Mr. Jerry McCombs, President, NAACP, to coordinate her celebration at noon on Monday, January 20, 2003.

- b. Commissioner Beatty asked where the County stood on Transportation issues as projects have been canceled. She requested feedback from staff.
- c. Chair Barnes said the Board of Commissioners makes recommendations for appointments to approximately 55 boards and commissions. She distributed a revised list of assignments for Board and Commissions and she recommended that the Board of Commissioner assignments be rotated every two years.

Commissioner Beatty recommended term limits on all of the County's boards and commissions.

Chair Barnes said some boards and commissions have statutory requirements.

6. Adjournment.

At 2:50 p.m., there being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Barger made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Thelda B. Rhoney
County Clerk